TODAY.

My soul upon my lips hath set a seal,
And, though I needs must greet thee day by day,
What lies between us I must not reveal—
My life is spent in learning to obey.

But, oh! dear one, when thou and I shall meet
In that fair world that knows not garish fear,
Unfettered, shall these longing lips repeat
For evermore, "I loved thee always here."
—M. L. Smith in Harper's Weekly.

PRISCILLA'S ERROR.

It was first day afternoon, and Friend Priscilla Gibbons sat in the rocker in her cosy front room. The fire in the grate was of the brightest and cheeriest; the cat on the fur rug in front of the chimneypiece purred in solemn and self satisfied content; there were growing plants and vines in the broad window, and the sunshine filtered in through their fresh leaves, making flecks of light and shade on the gray carpet. It was cold out of doors, but from that room winter was shut out. It looked like a Quaker room. Everything shaded to gray and white. Friend Priscilla's yearly meeting bonnet was not more distinctly Friendly than was the pretty room where she came with her knitting or with her book in all her spare moments, and where, on first day evenings, she had her tea in honor of the special character of the day.

But no thought of tea was entertained in Friend Priscilla's brain just then, as she swung back and forth in her wicker rocker. The restful peace with which the day began had been scattered to the four winds of heaven, and it was with a soul entirely out of harmony with the serenity of her surroundings that the little lady sat there that afternoon.

"However could it have happened!" she moaned to herself over and over again. "Jane is so careful and I always look over the things and put them away myself." Like the Widow Green, "she searched the Scriptures to find a text that would somewhat ease her mind perplexed," but nothing seemed to exactly fit her case as she sighed to herself, "They dressed so differently in those days."

Friend Priscilla was the dearest old Quaker lady who ever attended meeting and sat in the "gallery." She had sat "facing the meeting" for more years than most of those in attendance at that particular place of worship cared to count up. Time had touched her lightly, and, although her hair was a little nearer white and her small hands a trifle more withered, her eyes were as bright and her cheeks as soft and peachy as they had been thirty years before. Friend Priscilla was distinctly a pretty old lady. One of the younger and more irreverent members of the meeting had greatly scandalized the older Friends by heedlessly remarking, "We younger ones have no chance in the matter of good looks; Priscilla Gibbons is the belle of every yearly meeting."

It might be shrewdly suspected, too, that Friend Priscilla was privately aware of her claims to consideration in the line of appearance. Never was fashionable dame more particular about her most ceremonious toilet than was this little Quakeress about her everyday apparel. Gay it could not be, out of regard for both her conscience and her taste, but exquisitely fine and soft and even in coloring it always was. As she sat facing the meetings on first day mornings, and as she talked with her class in the afternoon first day school, she was as fair and dainty to look upon as a piece of Dresden china.

And Friend Priscilla seldom knew a care. To all appearances her life flowed on in unruffled serenity. So it was a matter for some surprise to the other members of the meeting that the little lady had taken to preaching of late. The first day morning when she calmly untied her bonnet strings, laid the bit of plain millinery on the cushion beside her, arose and stood with her gray gloved hands serenely clasped on the railing in front of her while she preached clearly and earnestly on the desirability of preserving the Quaker traditions and customs, was a memorable one in the community.

The burden of her little sermons was always the preservation of the sacred character of the meetings, and her homilies carried more weight with the younger generation, and especially with the children, than did those of all the other speakers put together. It was chiefly through her influence that it grew customary for the first day school to attend the morning meeting in a body, and any tendency to restlessness or levity on the part of the youngsters was afterward impressed upon them by Friend Priscilla as a matter for deep and lasting sorrow. The boy who on one occasion made a rabbit with his handkerchief will remember to his dying day the look of grieved surprise which shone upon him from Friend Priscilla's face.

"And to think," grieved the old lady, "that now I am myself responsible for their levity. How can I ever go into the meeting house again? And I'm sure I can never preach after this!"

That same morning a "concern" of the biggest kind had been laid upon Miss Priscilla's gentle and reverent spirit. In the midweek meeting, at which the members of the day school, carried on as an adjunct of the Friends' organization, were present, she had seen unseemly smiles exchanged between some of the children. The longer she thought about it the more the circumstance weighed upon her, and on first day morning Friend Priscilla rose to deliver the message that had come to her.

Strange to say, she was slightly nervous for the first time in her preaching experience. She surreptitiously felt in her pocket for the customary handkerchief, and finding it in its place against a time of need went on with her sermon. Fate was against her. Just as she was fairly under way there were hasty steps on the pavement outside, the door opened with a crash, and squeak, squeak, squeak, came a strange man up the aisle to a front seat almost under the speaker's nose. Such an entry would have made a sensation in any Quaker meeting, but imagine the feelings of the assembled Friends at finding that the bold invader had settled himself comfortably on the women's side of the house!

The sermon was forgotten; every woman on one side, and every man on the other, and every youngster in every part of the house craned his or her individual neck to get a good view of the newcomer, who so rashly defied tradition. Friend Priscilla herself lost the thread of her discourse and stood there helpless in the general amazement. The stranger, startled by the silence and by the fixedness of the numerous gazes fastened upon him, roused himself to the situation, surveyed the two divisions of the house and proceeded to act. Squeak, squeak, down the aisle he went again; squeak, squeak, along the stones outside; and squeak, squeak, up the other aisle to a front seat in the Quaker synagogue.

The elders breathed again; the children tittered, and Friend Priscilla endeavored to gather up the broken threads of her interrupted discourse. But the inspiration had fled. After one or two ineffectual struggles to enunciate a proper sentence, the little lady sank into her seat, placed her gray bonnet precipitately on her head regardless of the white face ruffle, pulled her carefully ironed and folded handkerchief from her pocket, held it before her face and gave herself up to agitation.

Friend Priscilla's pocket handkerchiefs, like the rest of her belongings, were fine and beautifully kept, and the ones devoted to use for state occasions were religiously laid away in a box by themselves. As she sat there reflecting on the untowardness of the immediate occurrences Friend Priscilla's one consolation was the recollection that the handkerchief now decorously drooping before her face in a long, half fold had been taken that morning from the sacred box in which her best were preserved.

Rudely breaking in upon her meditations came an audible snicker from one corner of the room, followed by a giggle from another quarter. She was astonished to find the meeting breaking up and a friend at her elbow saying demurely, though with a laugh in her eyes: "Priscilla, hasn't thee made a mistake in thy kerchief? That hardly looks like the ones thee usually carries." One hasty glance at the article mentioned, another at the smiling looks directed toward her by the entire audience, an awakening to the conviction that it had been necessary to close the meeting on account of the incongruity of her attire, and Friend Priscilla hurried out and home by the back way.

First day school had no charms for her that day. Her dinner was a weariness to the flesh. The cat concluded a blizzard had swept the heart of his mistress, and retired to seek consolation in the light of the fire and the warmth of the rug. Afternoon ran on toward twilight, and twilight deepened into evening, and still Friend Priscilla Gibbons sat there gloomily, wondering how it had ever happened, and bemoaning that she of all people should have brought discredit upon the sacredness of a Friends' meeting, for it had taken no second glance to show that what she had supposed to be a neatly ironed, fine white handkerchief shading her agitated little face had been in reality a long white stocking, dangling its toe and heel audaciously toward the audience.—Philadelphia Times.

A Bright Christmas.

Christmas! What a flood of memories the word revives! To tell of the happiest Christmas I ever experienced is almost an impossibility—there were so many happy ones when my father was alive to teach me how to enjoy them. The first Christmas that I remember seems now like a scene from a long forgotten comedy. I was a very little boy then, but the day is impressed upon my memory by a mishap never to be forgotten. Who has not some time been given a drum by his dearest friend and closest confidant—his father? The drum that I received then was almost as large as I, and the very first use to which I put it was that of a stepladder.

My ambition at that moment was to reach the lofty altitude of an armchair. The drumhead, however, refused to sustain me and I fell through with a bang. How long I might have remained there it is impossible to say, for I never could have extricated myself alone. The hearty laugh in which my father indulged when he rescued me from my predicament is still a bright spot in my recollection.—George B. McClellan in New York Herald.

A Family of Dwarfs.

The appearance of a dwarf on the streets recently attracted considerable attention. He was from Anniston, and was the smallest man seen in Rome since the days of Tom Thumb. His name is W. F. Darnell, and his Lilliputian appearance is something remarkable. He is sixty-four years old, and is 4 feet and 4 inches high and weighs ninety-eight pounds. He has the face and every appearance of an old man, but when he is seen walking the observer is constantly reminded of the small boy.

Mr. Darnell came to Rome in search of assistance for his son, who is afflicted with a spinal trouble. His son is twenty-one years of age, and is thirty-seven inches high and weighs forty-four pounds. On election day Mr. Darnell carried his son to the polls in his arms and both voted. There is another son who is twenty-four years of age, and is forty-seven inches high and weighs ninety-eight pounds, the same as his father.—Rome (N. Y.) Tribune.

Some of Burns' Phrases.

Here are a few specimens of Burns' happy phrases: "The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley;" "The fear o' hell's the hangman's whip, to haud the wretch in order;" "But pleasures are like poppies spread; you seize the flower, its bloom is shed;" "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us to see oursel's as ithers see us;" "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn;" "Nursing her wrath to keep it warm;" "The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;" "What's done we partly may compute, but know not what's resisted;" "Princes and lords are but the breath of kings;" "The rank is but the guinea stamp, a man's a man for a' that."—London Tit-Bits.

Finds at Sea.

In respect to derelict or abandoned property at sea the ancient rule gave one-half to the salvor, but now the usual course is to allow the award to be governed by the same principles as in other salvage cases, taking into consideration the risk and labor employed in the service. Often a ship fortunate enough to save an imperiled or helpless vessel will make more money for her owners than she would on two or three voyages.—New York Evening Sun.

How the Number Nine Affects Love.

The first unmarried man passing beneath the lintel post of a door over which has been hung a pod containing nine peas will marry the maid who placed it there, and a piece of worsted with nine knots tied in it is considered a lucky charm for a sprained ankle.—New York News.